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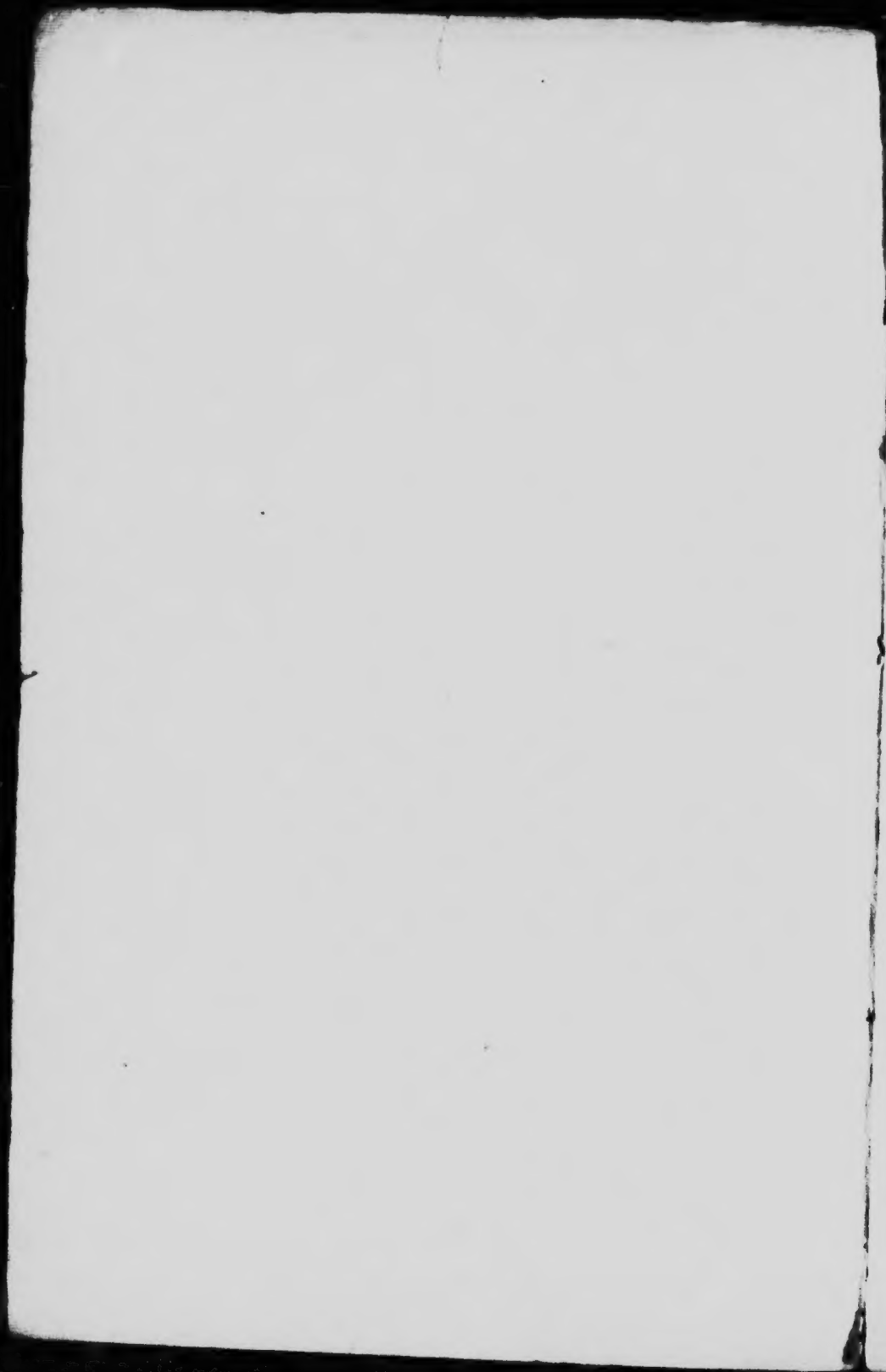
# SELF-CULTURE

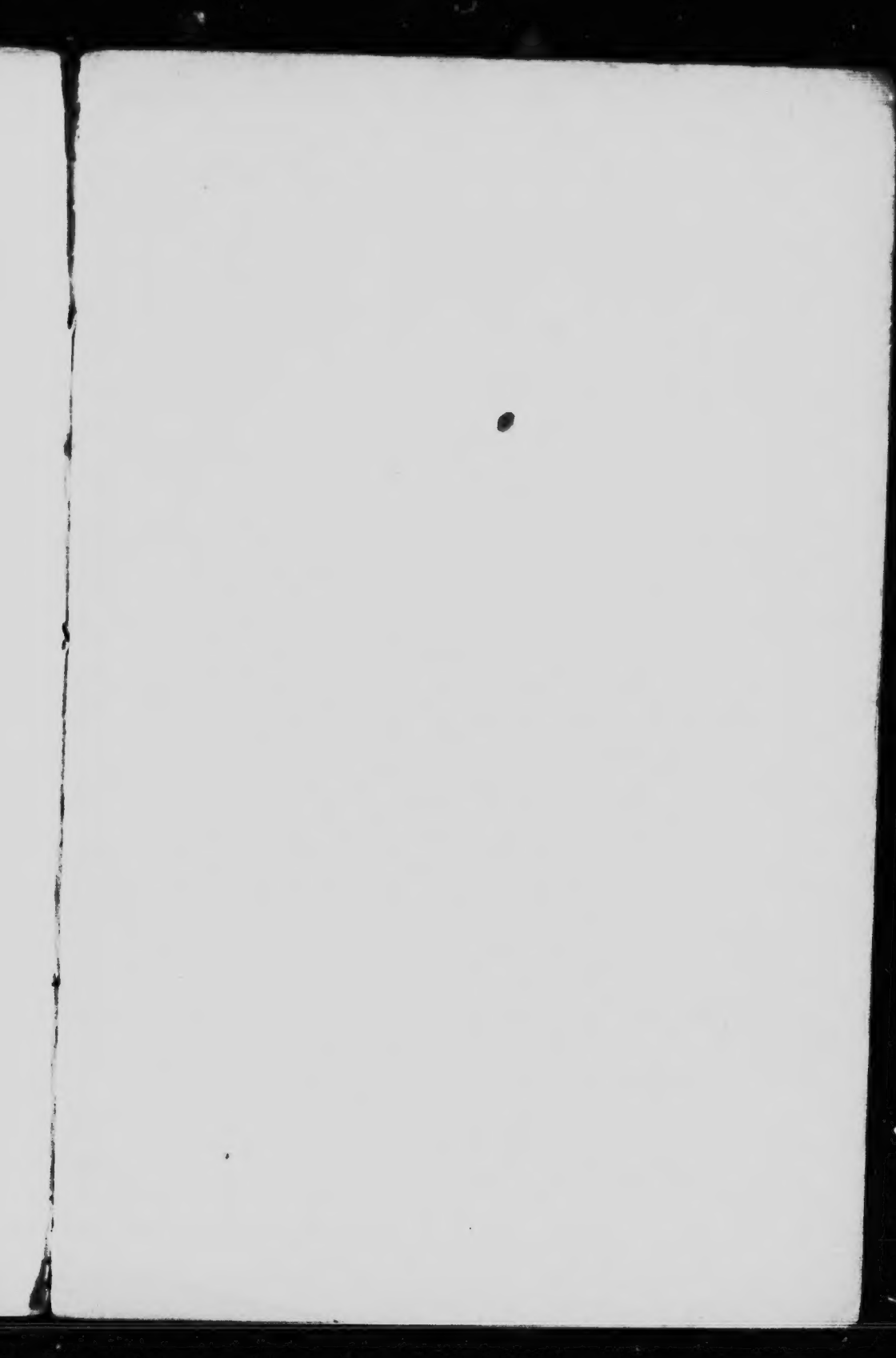
THE ONLY OPEN DOOR  
TO  
THOUSANDS

*Compliments of*

Young Men's Association,

200890.







## Catholic Young Men's Association, QUEBEC.

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"HEAVEN HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES."

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The object of this Association is contained in that highest principle of patriotism and philanthropy which consists in helping and stimulating men to elevate and improve themselves by their own free individual action. Books on every practical and useful branch of business, science, arts and trade can be obtained in the library for self improvement at home, at \$1.00 per annum, or 25 cts. for 3 months. Books must be returned, punctually every two weeks; notice must be given if wanted longer. The books must be kept clean and neat. Any one defacing a book will be held responsible for the full value of the book. Sick persons can obtain books free, by note from attending priest or some reliable party. All are requested to join the Library and help the good work. Any donation either in money or books, gratefully received.



## SELF-CULTURE.

THE ONLY OPEN DOOR TO THOUSANDS.

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Those who have the opportunity of attending school during the years of youth, may well be expected to achieve a respectable standing, if not distinction, in scholarly attainment, through the facilities which public schools, academic and collegiate institutions afford. But there are those who are not favored with these opportunities; they live remote from schools, or they are obliged to work for their own maintenance and to assist in the maintenance and education of others; and some, unfortunately, ignore their opportunities, neglect to attend school or to study out of it.

Every week, bright, enterprising young men of twenty or twenty-five years of age consult us as to what they shall do, and when we prescribe some pursuit which requires at least a fair English education, or even a classical one, they confess their utter inability to adopt our advice because they have no education; not from want of opportunity perhaps, but because they preferred, during their school years, to run the streets, witness base-ball games, shooting matches, regattas, or go into the country to hunt or fish; and thus wasted their precious time. When such persons reach the age of manhood they awake to the necessities of their situation, and feel obliged to

hammer out their living by the dull drudgery of the rudest manual labor. We always tell them, at least such of them as have natural talent for acquiring knowledge by means of self-culture, that they need not despair. Some such men have become great readers, but they read story papers and novels. Some average three hours a day in reading; indeed they often read when they should be asleep, resting themselves for the toils of the day following. The activity of their minds expressed by the yearning hunger to read, is proof positive that they have the natural tendency to scholarship, which only requires guidance and persistent drill to bear excellent and abundant fruit. If a person at twenty cannot read his own name in print, he need not be discouraged; he may be ashamed to confess his ignorance, but people know it without his confession, and he should be more ashamed to remain in ignorance than to confess, and employ means to get rid of it. Let him be brave enough to make a move for improving his mind. He could find some person in his neighborhood who would be willing to instruct him; some school-girl, some kindly matron, would be pleased and proud to open to an ambitious and worthy young man the avenue to knowledge, by looking over his lesson-book, while she might be doing the needle-work of the family, and teach him how to spell out the language. Many hundreds of negro slaves, some with gray hair, have thus acquired the rudiments of education, have learned to read, to write, and to cipher; and certainly a young white man, with sixty years of life before

him, has superior motives to acquire knowledge. Those, however, who have learned to read can start on a higher plane.

If a person will devote one solid hour a day to study, that would really be more than one-third of the time, during the year, in which pupils of the public schools are in school. Their sessions last five hours a day, or twenty-five hours a week, for thirty-nine weeks in the year; the rest of the time is vacation, which gives 975 hours for the school-sessions during the year. And if our home student would devote one hour a day for every day in the year, he will have 365 hours of study. We should expect that his Sunday reading would be worth to him, in the way of scholastic culture, quite as much as the study of any other day.

It should be remembered that after the pupil has thus studied grammar, arithmetic, geography, and composition for a year or two, he will be able to advance more rapidly, trading on the capital he acquires daily, and he may venture in a few years on the higher branches of learning. The world is familiar with the name of Elihu Burritt, "the learned blacksmith," who worked on the anvil eight hours a day studied eight hours, and rested and recreated eight hours; and he thus mastered fifty-two languages, and became the peer of the finest classical scholars in the world.

How many young men who need education sit about the village store, or congregate at the tavern, not to drink perhaps, but to talk and blend their



minds, that thereby they may be fed and brightened ? What ribald songs, what threadbare gossip about horses and dogs, trotting-matches, coon hunting ; or about trashy literature, which serves only to inflame the emotions without enlightening the understanding or strengthening the morals, fills up the time when ignorance and enthusiasm meet.

It may be better to read trash than to permit the mind to become stagnant and stupid ; but if the time thus employed were devoted to study, thousands might become eminent scholars. Let young people change from such reading to the study of medicine or law, and devote as much time to it as they now do to trash, and in seven years they might be able to win a diploma for their attainments in one of those professional departments.

Self-culture in many respects is the richest of all, for it has this quality : that it is self-obtained ; it is like flesh well worked on. Any horse in health can be fattened, if he can stand quietly in his stall, or walk over his field, and be fed abundantly, and have no work ; but the horse that can work every day and take on flesh will have solid fibre and enduring strength.

Some young men buy the current novels at twenty-five cents or fifty cents, and when they are read they are sold by the dozen for old paper. If such moneys were put into a Cyclopaedia, which is the cream of library containing a million volumes, and that cream gathered by scholarly men in all the departments of knowledge, whose work may be considered the concentrated essence of knowledge distilled from all the

books in the world—if such a work were procured and used by young men, it would tell on their future power and influence. Many a young man has read hundreds of volumes of stories, has fought the battles with his heroes, has sighed over their defeats and rejoiced in their successes, but he has thereby attained no solid culture. If he were to read in a newspaper an allusion to Charlemagne or Frederick the Great, he would be utterly at a loss to tell when and where they lived, who and what they were, or what they did ; but with a Cyclopedia, costing less than a hundred dollars for its sixteen great volumes, he could read half a dozen pages on Charlemagne, or a compact sketch of any other eminent man in the world's history, and ever after be at home in it. That is getting the juice of the subject and being able to depend implicitly on its correctness.

If he had a library of fifty thousand volumes, containing the history of Charlemagne and others, in bulky works written by partisans, he has not the time to read them ; his mind is hungry for knowledge, and his Cyclopedia will give him on almost any subject all that he will need to know. Besides, the Cyclopedia cites books on the subjects treated of, so that if he wish to extend his inquiries on any particular subject, he may do so. We have known men, not a few, who passed their twenty-fifth year just able to read, who have attained to eminence in literature and science by a course of self-instruction.

An active mind hungry for knowledge, or at least mental excitement, will do reading enough in novels

in ten years to acquire an excellent education, if the time and reading were properly directed to study. There is, therefore, every encouragement for aspiring and sensible young people to improve their culture by home study, and not feel discouraged at the thought that they have had no privileges of education, or have neglected opportunities that were offered.

How many persons could study three hours every day? In every village there is some wise and good man or woman, a minister, or doctor, or teacher, who would be glad to direct the inquiries of such students, and loan them books even, to facilitate their progress. One American young man was taught by his wife to read, after he was married, and that faithful wife saw him attain to honorable distinction as governor, senator, and president. The history of our country is full of instances in which young men have studied their spelling-books and read law by the light of pine knots at the chimney corner.

If it be objected that volatile and enthusiastic young men and women of twenty cannot be expected to make drudges of themselves, by thus devoting their time to books while others are enjoying the pleasures of society we reply, that those who, without education, talk over for the thousandth time their little round of exploits, become contracted and barren in their life: whereas if fifty of these young people were to forego, for several years, nearly all the gossiping, social habits incident to their style of life, and would devote themselves to the acquiring of solid culture, they might come together afterward,

and their society would be worth having, and those thus improved would be leaders in their vicinity for the next forty years.

This matter of self-culture after the age of maturity may be illustrated by a case that came under our treatment. Two men called for professional examination at our office. When informed that they were laborers, carrying the hod or using the shovel, we suggested that they learn a trade, and they both replied that they had not time; that at twenty-eight years of age it was too late. We replied, "You expect to work at \$1. 50 or less per day, as laborers, and to work for the next twenty or perhaps forty years. If you get 300 days' work in the year, at \$1. 50 a day, it would amount to \$450.00 in one year. If one of you were to enter on an apprenticeship at bricklaying, you could get at least seventy-five cents a day, which would be \$225.00 a year, and at the end of three years you would have earned \$675.00, and by economy you could make that support you. The other, working for three years at \$1. 50 a day, would have acquired twice as much, namely, \$1,350.00. At the end of three years more, bringing you up to the age of thirty-four, the mason would have had three dollars a day for three years, and that amount, added to what he earned during his apprenticeship, would enable him to show in the six years \$3,375.00 as the total sum earned; and in addition to that he has a trade, which makes him thenceforth in power to earn money equal to two laborers. The one continuing to carry the hod has earned in the same time \$2,700.00,

and the apprentice has acquired in the six years a trade and \$625.00 more than he would have done as a common laborer, which is more than a hundred dollars a year more than his friend the hod-carrier has earned in the same time, and henceforth, for thirty years, his earnings will be double; thus, having doubled his resources by a little economy and privation for three years. If for thirty years he can earn \$450.00 a year more than a laborer, it will show, without counting interest, \$13,500.00," a handsome difference, certainly, between the two.

One of the men after looking over the figures, replied, "I will do it, and begin to-morrow, for the boss has many times offered me the chance."

Let one young man hunt, fish, play dominoes, skate, and read a story-paper during his leisure, for ten years, and let another of equal talents spend his leisure in reading science and solid literature for the same time, and the difference between them in knowledge and mental vigor will place one of them in positions of honor and trust, and leave the other to wonder why he should be ignored and kept at low, poor-paying, hard pursuits, while his old playmate, with no better school culture than himself, shall be advanced to places of profitable and honorable public occupations.

Men cannot afford to live low down in the scale of being. In this country, at least, there is no impediment to the acquisition of culture. The laws of the States and the customs of the people favor it.

We do not suppose that all who acquire self-cul-

ture shall become professional men, but we would have the whole mind of the uneducated people lifted far above its present level.

Why should not a man who mixes mortar understand the chemistry of the work in which he is engaged? Why should not the bricklayer understand something of mathematics as applied to architecture? Why should any man, because he lays brick or mixes mortar, be nearly as stupid as the bricks and mortar he handles? Why should not the farmer, self-taught, be wise in all agricultural chemistry, botany, and geology, as well as in the labor of raising crops? Why must man know no more of that which lies beyond his line of vision, than the stupid ox he drives? Away, then, with the idea that you must go through life unknowing and unknown, because you have not been educated in your youth.

Patrick Henry had no high scholastic training, but he was a reader and a thinker, and the world will never forget him. Henry Clay did not even have a common school education, but he did not remain in that ignorance. Elihu Burritt might have done like hundreds of other blacksmiths, and continued to hammer out his daily bread by the sweat of his brow over the anvil, and never been heard of beyond the city of Worcester, Mass., where he lived. Let no one, therefore, say at twenty-five, or thirty years of age, that it is too late for him to acquire education, or to learn a useful occupation. We know a man who graduated in medicine at sixty two and entered on a lucrative practice, and is flourishing to-day at seventy.

Let mechanics improve their leisure in studying the science of their business. Many a sound, but uninstructed man is obliged to be a drudge through life as a subordinate in his trade, who by study might take a better rank in his business and as a man in the community. Any clearheaded carpenter may become a competent architect; every capable machinist may learn engineering; every seaman should try to understand the science of navigation; every merchant's clerk should study book-keeping and finance; and if they can never obtain a controlling position, they may at least secure success and respect in subordinate places. To be poor and dependent is bad enough, but to be ignorant also is unnecessary, and therefore disgraceful and intolerable.

### A LOVE STORY WITH A MORAL.

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I. ASKING PA. — "And so you want to marry my daughter, young man?" said farmer Bilkins, looking at the young fellow sharply from head to toes.

Despite his rather indolent, effeminate air, which was mainly the result of his education, Luke Jordan was a fine-looking fellow and not easily moved from his self-possession; but he colored and grew confused beneath that sharp, scrutinizing gaze.

"Yes, sir; I spoke to Miss Mary last night, and she referred me to you."

The old man's face softened.

"Molly is a good girl, a very good girl," he said,

stroking his chin with a thoughtful air, "and she deserves a good husband. What can you do?"

The young man looked rather blank at this abrupt inquiry. "If you refer to my abilities to support a wife, I can assure you—"

"I know that you are a rich man, Luke Jordan, but I take it for granted that you ask my girl to marry *you*, not your property. What guarantee can you give me, in case it should be swept away, as it is in thousands of instances, that you could provide for her a comfortable home? You have hands and brains—do you know how to use them? What can you do?"

This was a style of catechism for which Luke was quite unprepared, and he stared blandly at the questioner without speaking.

"I believe you managed to get through college—have you any profession?"

"No, sir; I thought—"

"Have you any trade?"

"No, sir; my father thought that with the wealth I should inherit I should not need any."

"Your father thought like a fool, then. He'd much better have given you some honest occupation and cut you off with a shilling—it might have been the making of you. As it is, what are you fit for? Here you are, a strong, able-bodied young man, twenty-four years old, and never earned a dollar in your life! You ought to be ashamed of yourself. And you want to marry my daughter. Now, I've given Molly as good advantages for learning as any girl in



town, and she hasn't thrown 'em away; but if she didn't know how to work, she'd be no daughter of mine. If I choose, I could keep more than one servant; but I don't, no more than I choose that my daughter should be a pale, spiritless creature, full of dyspepsia, and all sorts of fine-lady ailments, instead of the smiling, bright-eyed, rosy-checked lass she is. I *did* say that she should not marry a lad that had been cursed with a rich father; but she has taken a foolish liking for you, and I'll tell you what I'll do; go to work, and prove yourself to be a man; perfect yourself in some occupation—I don't care what, if it be honest—then come to me, and, if the girl be willing, she shall be yours."

As the old man said this he deliberately rose from the settle of the porch and went into the house.

II. MARY WILL WAIT.—Pretty Mary Bilkins was waiting to see her lover down at the garden gate, their usual trystingplace. The smiling light faded from her eyes as she noticed his sober, discomfited look.

"Father means well," she said, as Luke told her the result of his application. "And I'm not sure but he's about right, for it seems to me that every man, rich or poor, ought to have some occupation."

Then, as she noticed her lover's grave look, she said, softly,—“Never mind,—I'll wait for you, Luke.”

Luke Jordan suddenly disappeared from his accustomed haunts, much to the surprise of his gay associates. But wherever he went, he carried with

him those words which were like a tower of strength to his soul: "I'll wait for you, Luke."

III. A TRADE.—One pleasant, sunshiny morning, late in October, as farmer Bilkins was propping up the grapevine in his front yard, that threatened to break down with the weight of its luxurious burden, a neat-looking cart drove up, from which Luke Jordan alighted with a quick, elastic step, quite in contrast with his formerly easy, leisurely movements.

"Good-morning, Mr. Bilkins. I understood that you wanted to buy some butter tubs and flour barrels. I think I have some that will just suit you."

"Whose make are they?" asked the old man, as, opening the gate, he paused by the wagon.

"Mine," replied Luke, with an air of pardonable pride.

Mr. Bilkins examined them one by one.

"Thy'll do," he said, coolly, as he set down the last of the lot. What will ye take for them?"

"What I asked you for six months ago to-day—your daughter, sir."

The roguish twinkle in the old man's eyes broadened into a smile.

"You've got the right metal in you, after all," he cried. "Come in, lad—come in. I shouldn't wonder if we made a trade after all."

Nothing loth, Luke obeyed.

"Molly!" bawled Mr. Bilkins, thrusting his head into the kitchen door.

IV. ENTER MOLLY.—Molly tripped out into the entry. The round white arms were bared above the

elbows and bore traces of the flour she had been sifting. Her dress was a neat gingham, over which was tied a blue checked apron; but she looked as winning and lovely as she always did wherever she was found.

She blushed and blushed and smiled as she saw Luke, and then, turning her eyes upon her father, waited dutifully to hear what he had to say.

The old man regarded his daughter for a moment with a quizzical look.

"Moll, this young man—mayhap you've seen him before—has brought me a lot of tubs and bars all of his own make—a right good article, too. I asks a pretty steep price for them, but if you are willing to give it, well and good; and hark ye, my girl, whatever bargain you make, your father will ratify."

As Mr. Bilkins said this he considerably stepped out of the room, and we will follow his example. But the kind of bargain the young people made can be readily conjectured by the speedy wedding that followed.

Luke Jordan turned his attention to the study of medicine, of which profession he became a useful and influential member; but every year, on the anniversary of his marriage, he delights his mother-in-law by some specimens of the handicraft by which he won what he declares to be the best and dearest wife in the world.

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